

are still many stupendous ruins to remind us. Their theatres were particularly huge, as we might gather from a fact mentioned in the classics, that as many as 50,000 persons were killed and wounded by the fall of a theatre hastily and improperly built for the sake of gain—a wicked speculation! There is also not only massiveness in Roman architecture, but what I would be allowed to call *multitude*. You have generally an endless succession and piling of columns and arches, which produce an astonishing effect by their very number. In many lands that once trembled at the thunder of Capitoline Jove, that dethroned god is now glad, as it were, to take refuge among vast and desolate ruins, where he sits in solitude, a mythological Marius on a foreign strand, and amid the temples of a strange creed. Complaint has been made, not indeed of his overthrow, but of the overthrow of the architecture that served him. It is true that together with some other styles the Roman seems to have been cast away into the intellectual lumber-room, which it is to be feared is somewhat too spacious. It may be found by the curious in the castle of Indolence, which it is our object, our duty, to besiege.

Great taste for the arts prevailed at a much earlier period than at Rome, in those parts of Italy colonised from Greece, at Syracuse and Agrigento, at Posidonia or Paestum, and many other cities of the southern coast. In Italy itself, the Etruscans seem to have had great natural genius for design, and are celebrated to this day on that account. We leave Rome, towards its fall, a city of palaces, abounding in all conceivable articles of taste and luxury; we go to look once more at the Colosseum, and the arch of Trajan, observing the beauty and usefulness of that form which the Grecians either knew not, or did not use; we hurry away to escape the Goths, and find ourselves in the city of Constantine. It was here, during the long night of Gothic domination, that not only taste, but the arts themselves took refuge, while it must, at the same time, be confessed, that we owe their preservation in other parts of Europe to the monastic system. At that city of the East was developed the Byzantine taste—a blended taste, but one blended with great beauty and grace. Its style seems applicable to the climate and situation; it appears to allow more of the semigrotesque, the quaint, the highly ornamental than did either the Greek or Roman—with what advantage, is another matter; it has a certain original charm about it that is highly attractive, and it seems to permit the play of fancy as well as of imagination. The church of St. Sophia is a fine specimen of the architecture of Constantinople, but one too well known to architects to need particular remark. Concerning the Romanesque, I will simply say, that the taste of it seems inferior to the pure Gothic. We may here glance slightly backward at the taste of the Saracens, who, at a period when mental and moral darkness brooded over the Roman, or rather the Greek, empire, were no less famous for their literary and philosophical character than in their history, civil and military. Al Mansur, caliph of Bagdad, was a student of the arts. He was educated by two Christian physicians, and applied himself to astrology. Haroon al Rashid, his successor, in 786, well known to most of us through the medium of the Arabian Nights—which will give you no least notion of Arabian taste in literature, and of Arabian imagination,—devoted himself far more to the arts. He was excessively partial to poets, and never travelled unless accompanied by a band of learned men. Al Mamun brought to perfection what Mansur and Rashid had commenced. Under the auspices of these three model princes, there is no doubt the cities of Bagdad and Damascus arose in considerable beauty, and displayed a grace and fancy of taste, such as might be expected from a purified Oriental genius. Damascus is to this day, a most elegant and tasteful city: nature is not forgotten there: all the dwellings built, I believe, of marble, have each its delightful grove watered by the river; and to this taste for nature is ascribed the freedom of the Damascenes from plague, on account of the detachment of their houses and the ventilation obtained by means of their gardens. Their taste for the following of useful arts was also highly developed: the steel

of Damascus will readily occur to you as an illustration. I must here also take leave anticipatively to notice the taste of the Moors of Spain. It is difficult to find a more poetical or more lovely architectural taste than theirs. Their buildings seem an embodiment of imagination; their arched courts, their graceful fountains,—only nearly approached by those of Constantinople,—are otherwise wholly unequalled. The Moors possessed a most extraordinary fertility of design; and I think a study of their taste, as far as practicable, would bestow a somewhat desirable elegance and lightness on the English genius, ever inclined to be too solely material. If we shut out from our contemplation and our sea imagination and fancy, what ignorant hermits would our minds become!—truly, the inhabitants of a blank desert, cheered by no flowers, enlivened by no sweet sounds. As is the mind, so is the work: where you find in a man too great a predilection for ornament, recommend him to the study of the Pyramids; but if you perceive in him a baldness of thought, a want of idealty, advise him to take a pilgrimage to the Alhambra. Many of the curious developments of taste occurred under the protection of the monasteries, such as the art of illuminating manuscripts, painting glass, and the like. Superstition at this period dictated much of the grotesque that has lasted even down to our days, but which still in our climate has its charms; but the whole age that elapsed after the fall of the Roman empire to within a certain period of the Norman era, is very much obscured; and it is to be feared that the prevailing taste was mainly for bloodshed and rapine. When civilisation again arose, and spread across this barren waste, religion, which had before fostered, then entirely assumed the direction of the arts, and engendered all taste for its sacred purposes.

With the development of the glorious Gothic style you are all acquainted; but it may be observed, that it derives much of its taste from the following of nature; not a small illustration of which is the popular idea that the interior of the Gothic cathedral derives its forms from the forest's avenues. Concerning this notion itself, it may be said that trees are not naturally in the habit of arranging themselves in measured avenues, but grow promiscuously; that such avenues have been so planted by man; and that to arrange columns and arches in a similar manner would but be the carrying out of his own idea. There is a uniformity of taste in Gothic art in each of its styles, the styles succeed each other in due order; there is in it great unity of design, and it derives, from its aspiring character, a sublimity not easily obtained from any combination of horizontal lines. It admits of the highest and most varied imagery; it assimilates itself so much to nature as to admit of almost any natural production, especially of foliage, as an appropriate ornament—though it may be observed that we do not want nature reproduced, but idealised—indeed, it would not seem difficult to imagine that certain buildings in this style had grown gradually out of the ground. Finally, the taste of Gothic art is at once chaste, solemn, and sublime, and versatile as to ornament—almost indescribably: this style has also a peculiar power of inspiring awe. It seems also certain that the vertical taste, so to say, has, in the north at least, many advantages over the horizontal. The chief characteristic of Italian taste, developed in perfection subsequently to the Gothic, is a wonderful grace of design, execution, and expression. It is what becomes the climate and the sky under which it grew up and flourished—what you would expect from the warm and florid genius of the people, and what can best be displayed in the use of productions natural to their country. Every architectural student must be well acquainted with the greatest works of the Italians, for it is only by the study of perfection in all branches of his art that he can hope himself to attain to it. It would, therefore, be but a matter of repetition to discourse on the beauties of modern Rome, Venice, Florence, or Milan; we would simply say they are naturally excessively difficult of imitation in an adverse climate, and against an obdurate sky. Among the European nations, after the Italians, taste appears to have been best

developed in France. In the present age, the taste of Germany is grand and solid; Munich is celebrated for its architectural beauty; Berlin and Vienna boast some magnificent statues. I might refer to Rauch's statue of Frederick the Great, and others by the same artist. Even Russia is taking its stand, and, by the aid of unlimited expenditure, is producing some of the greatest works. It would appear that continental Gothic is inferior in point of purity to the English style; it is, without doubt, more immense, but it would be difficult to find abroad the equal of Westminster Abbey, in point of beauty, or of the York Minister in respect of beauty and magnitude combined. But Gothic has long been generally disused on the Continent, while in England it is justly being revived. The classic taste prevails in other lands, and there is little doubt we are far surpassed in this respect by France. But the difference of our sky must not be forgotten—for our climate and sombre heaven, the Gothic is the most fit; and although we should endeavour to excel in all styles, so that we do excel in our own native style we may be content to leave the more successful imitation of Greece to more propitious climes. There is, however, no reason why the classic we do build should not be good—there is no cause why, because the Louvre is hardly to be equalled, we should rejoice in the present National Gallery as the work of our united arts, the symbol of our national proficiency. Taste in England, with respect to architecture, seems to have expired from the time of Elizabeth to that of Charles II., when it was gloriously raised again from the dead, in the Italian, by Wren, whose numerous works are, many of them, the very embodiment of that purity on which it is necessary to insist. I have heard objection made to Wren's detail—with that I have nothing to do, and I do not here use the word *purity* in the sense of *strictness of imitation*, but in its own. To those, however, who complain of his detail, I will answer, however inconsequently, by speaking of his *outline*. We may observe that for Italian to have due effect here, it must, at least, in ecclesiastical buildings, be of the very best in design, and out shorn of its appropriate adornment, as in the interior of St. Paul's, where art, in its highest and noblest uses, has been sacrificed to a narrow popular prejudice, and the first sensation felt on entering that majestic edifice is a chill;—it must, in a word be *franc*, as Wren would have made it had he been unshackled by external ignorance;—it must be the Italian we see in the steeple of Bow. Ideas drawn from a foreign source, should not be deprived of all their beauty in the act, just as literary works lose their charm by being translated. If it be said, "but they must by necessity be so deprived," I answer, "that is an excellent reason why we should keep to our own art." It may be well to adduce but one instance of our failure. Look at the *rustication* of certain buildings! You will perceive that it has dwindled into a precise, methodical, and miserable manner of lacerating walls, which look as if they had a kind of worm disease;—they display (as a friend of mine added with great point to this remark) not rustication, but *vermiculation*. Where is the idea of method—of a set pattern in rustication? But, look at the Pitti Palace. What is it there? Why, the wall seems built with fragments of a mountain—huge masses piled titanically together—giving a grand, rugged, truly rustic aspect, and creating also bold contrasts of light and shade. *That* is rustication. There is no wretched, wringing pattern in that. Our taste is now also too much addicted to meddling. There is too great an attempt to marry Caryatides to Gorgones—to too much popping of indescribable steeples on Greek bodies, what may be called elephant-and-castle architecture—against this it is necessary to guard.

Having then thus far pursued the history of Taste, I would offer a few concluding remarks on the thing itself. It may be asked, "How is taste to be obtained?" The reply is, by study. By continual observation, also, of all works of art, and by consequent comparison and induction in the mind; and we have already said that taste is the result of a discriminative faculty, and that the power of rightly discriminating is necessarily in-